

City removes  
encampment

Holy Land conflict  
forces clergy home



Eight welcomed  
in joyful service

# The Anglican

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO

A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

www.toronto.anglican.ca

JANUARY 2024



Bishop Andrew Asbil hugs the Rev. Canon Samantha Caravan, incumbent of All Saints, Peterborough, following the opening service of Synod. At left, Archdeacon John Anderson, Canon Laura Walton and Bishop Peter Fenty (right) exchange the Peace during the service. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

## Together again

**AFTER** four long years, Synod convened in person again on Nov. 17-18 in Richmond Hill.

And what a time it was. To be together again to worship, eat, discuss, learn, watch, listen, sing, laugh, applaud, struggle and dream was, as Bishop Asbil said, a tonic for the soul.

"It is so, so, so good to finally be gathered together in one place," he said in his Charge to Synod. "It is so good to be in a familiar space that we have not occupied since 2019. It is so good to hear the buzz and chatter of Anglicans gathering in the crush court and gathering around tables and meeting new friends and seeing old friends. It is wonderful to hear Anglicans singing again in harmony and

in unison, and not in muffled, semi-muted tones online.

"It is wonderful to be able to gather. Chaplains from independent schools, from hospitals, lay readers, lay leaders, deacons, priests, leaders in parishes large and small, from the four corners of this diocese, from the Kawarthas to Mississauga, from Penetanguishene to Brighton. To be able to be in this space. We have longed to be in each other's presence. And in the name of Jesus Christ, welcome."

This issue of *The Anglican* is devoting eight pages to celebrate this great gathering. It all begins on Page 5. Enjoy.

*Stuart Mann, editor*

# City clears encampment outside church

## Yard used by parish fenced and blocked

After a year of intermittent threats to clear the encampment of unhoused people at St. Stephen-in-the-Fields in Toronto, staff from the City of Toronto's Encampment Office informed the incumbent in mid-October that the yard would be cleared within a week because a "community group," never before heard of in the community, had obtained a permit to put in a pollinator garden. The parish made the difficult decision to retain a law firm to fight this. Almost immediately, the city's legal department stated that the permit had been withdrawn, but that the encampment would still be cleared due to a fire risk. Offers from the parish to work with the city to mitigate fire risk were refused. On Nov. 20, a judge rejected the parish's application for an injunction to prevent the clearing.

BY THE REV. CANON MAGGIE HELWIG

A year ago, I wrote in this paper, "We will be, until we can be no longer, the last safe place." On Nov. 24, after months of negotiation, struggle, compromise and crisis, that safety was broken.

It was not as bad as it might have been, when City of Toronto crews came to clear our encampment. I know that there were people within the large and complicated structure that is the City of Toronto who tried

to make this less than brutal, who did what they could, and they did make a difference. Shelter Services had reserved shelter-hotel rooms for the people in the encampment who wanted them, though what this meant was that those rooms were not available for others seeking indoor space the previous night, and we know that many were turned away that night. Some people took the rooms, and that is a very good thing, though the rush, the stress, the need to pack a bag instantly and go, led to several breakdowns and medical crises over the course of the day, and some emotional damage that has not yet healed. Others were squeezed onto the small area that is indisputably church property, though we don't know how long they will be permitted to stay. Some had already left two days earlier, when city staff first told them that the area was going to be cleared.

Then, at some point in the afternoon, one person refused to move. They had accepted referrals to shelter-hotels twice over the past year, and both times had been evicted within days for trivial reasons. This was their home, the one place that had never told them to leave. Staff from the Department of Transportation handed them a notice of trespass. They read it over, said, "You got the name wrong," and handed it back.

We stood for hours, then, in the



Supporters gather outside St. Stephen-in-the-Fields in Toronto before City of Toronto crews move in to tear down an encampment for unhoused people outside the church. At right, the city puts cement blocks in the cleared area and surround it with a fence. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON AND ST. STEPHEN-IN-THE-FIELDS

bitter cold – supporters, media, residents trying to rebuild their tents along the side of the church. We brought hot water bottles and French vanilla coffee and vegetarian curry to the one person who wouldn't leave, as they wrapped themselves up in blankets and quietly whispered prayers. It was after sunset, and church volunteers were trying to serve our weekly drop-in dinner, by the time the city staff brought in the machine that we know as the Claw, a huge piece of heavy machinery that seizes tents and belongings and recycling bins indiscriminately and drags them into a trash compactor. In the dark, the Claw was driven through a narrow residential street, to scrape all signs of human occupation from half of the churchyard.

In the other half of the yard, the

remaining resident and I stood protected by a patio umbrella, watching. We didn't know if the police would be coming to take them. But police did not come for them. Good people in several different places, that night, people I know but can't name here, were able to shape some decisions. Supporters blocked the Claw for a while, and others used the time to gather up the belongings of the people who had been hastily dispersed. The Claw moved back and forth across the small street, and neighbours, seeing it from their windows, ran down from the apartment building next door to join our supporters. It was nearly midnight by the time it ended, by the time an eight-foot-high security fence went up around half of the area that had been used as the churchyard for over 100 years, which has now been claimed by the Department of Transportation as their own. A few days later, more city trucks arrived, and, with no warning, deposited huge concrete blocks over the entire fenced area. The yard which had, for so long – long before the encampment, long before I was the incumbent – been a place where people could come when they were lost or hungry or in need of help, was now fenced and blocked, and made as inhuman as the resources of the city could



make it.

But when the crews left, the one person who would not leave was still there, with their tent and their belongings, and they are still there now as I write this in early December. Others are still camped along the side of the church. The human community that has grown here has not been destroyed. And so we enter Advent. Let the skies pour down righteousness.

*The Rev. Canon Maggie Helwig is the incumbent of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, Toronto.*

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# Outbreak of war changes plans for pair in Holy Land

BY THE REV. JEANETTE LEWIS AND THE REV. SHELLEY MCVEA

**AFTER** a year of excited planning, we arrived in Tel Aviv early in the morning on Oct. 4 and journeyed to St. George's College in Jerusalem for its tour of the Holy Land.

We spent a couple of days walking around the city of Jerusalem waiting for the course to start with evening Eucharist on Oct. 5. The atmosphere in Jerusalem was calm and alive, and the weather was hot. It was shaping up to be a great 10 days walking in the "Footsteps of Jesus."

On Friday we journeyed to the Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized. Our image of a pristine flow of water turned into a muddy trickle of what it must have been. The reason for this is that parched Israel and Jordan siphon off 98 per cent of the water for their use. That did not discourage us, however, from getting our feet wet and renewing our baptismal vows. After a wonderful lunch, we headed to the wilderness for a time of quiet reflection.

What we thought would be a lovely biblical experience turned out to be probably a more accurate picture of what the footsteps of



**Clockwise from above: the Rev. Shelley McVea and the Rev. Jeanette Lewis on the plane heading to the Holy Land, just a few days before it would erupt in war; Jeanette renews her baptismal vows in the Jordan River; Shelley at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. PHOTOS BY THE AUTHORS**

Jesus were really like – the Prince of Peace walking amidst a land of strife. We were definitely inspired and touched emotionally by being present where our faith had its beginnings.

On Saturday morning, while preparing to head to Bethlehem, the Very Rev. Richard Sewell, the dean of the college, called us in, saying, "I need you to meet me in the library right now!" As we hustled into the library, we wondered why he sounded so stern. Canon Sewell advised us that Hamas had attacked Israel, and we were told to stay in this sheltered area, away from any windows, until we got further news.

That afternoon was spent getting know our fellow pilgrims very well as we pondered what our course might turn out to be. Would there be a trip to Bethlehem? No. Would our trip to Galilee the next day also be in jeopardy? It was too early to tell. Our course became a day-to-day event, as the dean and our instructor worked diligently



and tirelessly in taking us only to places that would be safe.

With this assurance of our safety, we were allowed to journey as a group to the old city on Sunday. There were numerous sirens sounding and forcing us to take shelter in protected areas over the next couple of days. After returning from a delayed Galilee trip, we were to start planning to leave early. Of course, by this time all flights had been cancelled except for some El Al flights.

On Oct. 13 we were again summoned by the dean to go immediately to the library. The Archbishop of Jerusalem had been advised that



the borders might soon be closed. We were given a decision: did we want to leave in the next half hour, or did we want to leave the next morning? Jeanette chose to leave right away. Shelley chose to leave the next morning.

While making the bus trip to the northern border, Jeanette passed through many checkpoints. This involved numerous Israeli soldiers boarding the bus with large rifles, checking IDs several times. Finally the bus made it to the Jordanian border, where, after paying border fees and walking and riding across the border region, Jeanette made it safely into Jordan. After being fed and sheltered at a school for the deaf run by the Anglican Church, Jeanette headed to the Amman airport for a flight home.

Meanwhile Shelley, still in Jerusalem, got the disappointing news at dinner that night that the borders

had closed and her way out the next morning was cancelled. The search for a flight home began in earnest. Plans were made and adjusted again and again amidst the stress of a country now at war. This did allow her three extra days in Jerusalem, for which she is grateful. Finally, after an uneventful drive to the Tel Aviv airport, Shelley headed for home.

We are so thankful to the people of St. George's College, who sheltered us physically and emotionally during this time. We continue to pray for the work of the college. We are also grateful for all your prayers, which were felt and appreciated by us both.

*The Rev. Jeanette Lewis is the incumbent of St. Barnabas Chester. The Rev. Shelley McVea is the priest-in-charge of St. Saviour, Toronto.*

**Brighten up your day.**

Photo adapted from Fizkes/Shutterstock

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# This year's vestry motion and the human right to housing



BY ELIN GOULDEN

The fact that Canada is in a housing crisis is indisputable. Across our diocese, rents are rising higher than inflation, with the average monthly rent for a one-

bedroom apartment now over \$1,500 even in Cobourg and Lindsay, nearing \$2,000 in Barrie, Collingwood and Oshawa, over \$2,300 in Peel and York regions and over \$2,500 in Toronto.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), 15.3 per cent of Ontario households are in core housing need – that is, they are paying more than 30 per cent of gross household income on housing, their housing is not in adequate condition or is too small for the size of the household, or any combination of these factors. Housing policy analyst Carolyn Whitzman has pointed out in a recent report that the need is actually much greater, as CMHC calculations do not include people experiencing homelessness or living in shared housing conditions such as student residences or long-term care homes, or those living with roommates. As we have seen from downtown Toronto and Brampton to Barrie, Peterborough, Whitby and Port Hope, more and more of our neighbours are being pushed into homelessness, and existing shelter systems are insufficient to meet the rising need.

Given these figures, it may be surprising to hear that housing is a human right in Canada. The human right to housing is not only enshrined in international treaties Canada has signed, including the International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals; the National Housing Strategy Act (2019) also commits the federal government to the progressive realization of the right to housing. While this does not mean that the government guarantees everyone a home, it does mean that the government must do everything in its power to realize the right to housing for Canadians, including removing barriers to the realization of that right.

Barriers to realizing the right to housing go beyond a lack of supply, though recent policy at all levels of government has focused primarily on increasing supply. Policies that drive up rents faster than inflation, permit the rapid expansion of short-term rentals and reward maximizing profits on rental housing at the expense of keeping units affordable and in good repair pose even more significant obstacles to realizing the human right to housing. We are currently losing affordable housing units faster than we can build them. We must also take steps to prevent the loss of existing affordable housing stock.

This year's social justice vestry motion addresses several of the key barriers to realizing the human right to housing, with calls addressed to every level of government. The federal government can do its part by targeting public funds and favourable tax treatment to those developers and projects that demonstrably address housing need; meeting clear conditions on affordable rents, non-displacement policies and eviction prevention policies; and limiting public funds and tax incentives for those developers and real estate investment vehicles that prioritize profit over the human right to housing.

The provincial government can close rent control loopholes, including vacancy decontrol, which allow landlords to raise rents to any level they choose between tenants. The province can also work with municipal governments to enact and enforce reasonable restrictions on short-term rentals, to preserve rental housing stock in local communities.

These policies may look abstract on paper, but they have a very real impact on people's lives. We all know people struggling to pay rising rents despite lapses in basic building upkeep, people who have been priced out of their communities, or people who have been forced to try to find new housing when their building has been demolished for an expensive new one to be built in its place. Some of us, or members of our immediate families, may have experienced this ourselves.

You can learn more about this year's social justice vestry motion by visiting [www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/vestry-motion). In addition to the motion and background, there are links for further reading and viewing that explore the issues in more depth. The Social Justice & Advocacy Committee also invites you to submit questions on this year's motion by Jan. 15, which we will do our best to address in our annual video Q&A.

Scripture recognizes the human need for shelter, security and dignity. Isaiah 32:18 reads, "My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." If we are truly committed to realizing the right to housing, our laws and policies must reflect this commitment.

*Elin Goulden is the diocese's Social Justice and Advocacy consultant.*



## The Anglican

The Anglican is published under the authority of the Bishop of Toronto and the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto. Opinions expressed in The Anglican are not necessarily those of the editor or the publisher.

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**Circulation:** For all circulation inquiries, including address changes, new subscriptions and cancellations, call the Circulation Department at 416-924-9199, ext. 259/245, or email [circulation@national.anglican.ca](mailto:circulation@national.anglican.ca). You can also make changes online: visit [www.anglicanjournal.com](http://www.anglicanjournal.com) and click Subscription Centre.

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**In the Diocese of Toronto:**

A community of 254 congregations in 210 parishes covering 26,000 square kilometers. Of the nearly 5 million people who live within the diocesan boundaries, 376,000 claim to be affiliated with the Anglican Church, with about 80,000 people identified on the parish rolls. The diocese is home to many ethnic and language-based congregations, including African, Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, French, Hispanic, Japanese, and Tamil. The City of Toronto has a large population of aboriginal peoples.

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# Opening ourselves to an interfaith world



BY MURRAY MACADAM

We live in a world fractured by deep divisions involving wealth, race, political views, cultural values and, all too often, religious divisions.

What can we do to help heal those divisions? Could our Anglican faith communities play a role?

Interfaith dialogue is a growing international movement that has become increasingly popular as a way for people of all faiths to learn from one another, share learnings about faith and address issues we face as a global community. As the late Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk and peace activist, said, "In dialogue we allow what is beautiful, peaceful and meaningful in the 'Other' to transform us." Dialogue enables us to stop hurting each other and instead help create a world of peace and justice.

It can also enrich our faith life and encourage new ways of thinking about our faith. For example, we tend to think of the parable of the Good Samaritan as a story chiefly about compassion, yet it has an interfaith element as well. It lifts up someone from a marginalized religious group, the Samaritans, as the person who shows authentic faith.

Roman Catholic theologian Fr. John Dunne speaks of interfaith dialogue as "passing over," meaning a shifting of standpoint, a going over to the standpoint of another culture, another religion. It is followed by the process of coming back into one's own culture and religion with fresh insights.

Anglican interfaith initiatives are blossoming around the world. Former Nigerian archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, who helped draft a recent Lambeth call on interfaith relations, has called Canada a "mission field" in terms of interfaith relations because of its position as a destination for people from various backgrounds and beliefs.

The mission field description is apt for other reasons. The sad reality is that many of us remain unaware of the beliefs held by the growing number of our neighbours who are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or members of other faith groups. I must confess that only a few years ago did I learn that Muslims also love Jesus and believe him to be a prophet of God.

What could interfaith dialogue actually look like, and how could it be lived out? How can people of other faiths enrich our understanding and experience of God?

In my community of Peterborough, a notable example is the Abraham Festival, a gathering of the spiritual descendants of Abraham – Jews, Christians and Muslims – who meet in a spirit of celebration and awe to know one another. It had its roots in the desire of three women – a Muslim, a Jew and a Christian – to celebrate a shared heritage through our common ancestor Abraham. The group strives to demystify "the other" by celebrating similarities and encouraging acceptance of differences. It embraces people of faith along with all who care about peace, equality and social justice.

The Abraham Festival network builds bridges and relationships between community members by promoting peace and dispelling stereotypes. Members embrace

diversity and call for peace and social justice, principles that are common to all three faiths. Activities include discussions, the annual festival, shared meals and worship, and refugee sponsorships.

Other examples of interfaith cooperation stretch beyond education. For more than 30 years, an Ontario-wide anti-poverty organization called the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) has mobilized people of faith to work towards an end to poverty. The group recently held a forum at Queen's Park involving 60 people from southern Ontario to hear from MPPs of all parties and learn from a rabbi about the call to ensure dignity for all, and to explore action proposals to counter poverty and homelessness.

These are encouraging developments; yet much more can be done, especially to reach Anglicans in the pews. For example, why couldn't each parish resolve to at least once a year have a leader of another faith tradition, such as an imam or a rabbi, give a reflection about their faith in lieu of a sermon?

French writer Victor Hugo noted that "there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come." Interreligious dialogue is an idea whose time has come. Paul McKenna, an expert on interfaith dialogue and creator of the Golden Rule interfaith poster found in schools and churches across Canada, says, "Never in history have we seen such levels of cooperation among the world's religions. We are all invited to partake of this multifaceted commonwealth."

*Murray MacAdam is a member of St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough.*

# SYNOD 2023

The Diocese of Toronto's 162nd Regular Session of Synod was held Nov. 17-18 at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North hotel in Richmond Hill. The theme was *Cast the Net*, after the diocese's visioning and strategy process. Here are some of the highlights. For more information about any of these items, visit the Synod page of the diocese's website, [www.toronto.anglican.ca](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca).

## DAY 1

### Synod starts with Eucharist and Bishop's Charge

Synod started with a worship service that included a land acknowledgement and the Bishop's Charge. The readings were read in English and Spanish and the gospel was read from First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament. Bishop Andrew Asbil based his charge on John 21, the scriptural passage that undergirds *Cast the Net*, the diocese's visioning and strategy process. He spoke about the initiatives coming out of *Cast the Net*, including the Season of Spiritual Renewal, of which the Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Paulsen will be the coordinator. He spoke about his hopes for a companionship program between the Diocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Brasilia, and his hope for the diocese to engage in a capital campaign, with a feasibility study beginning in late 2024. He expressed his gratitude to all the clergy and lay leaders of the Diocese, staff and his wife Mary. For the complete charge, see pages 8-9.

### Sponsors thanked

The honorary secretaries of Synod – Sheila Robson, ODT, the Rev. Canon Lisa Newland and Connie Kendall, ODT – thanked Synod's sponsors, which generously contributed to offset the costs of the event. They included Burgundy Asset Management Ltd. and Canso Investment Counsel Ltd., AON and Design Werke, M&M Faith-Based Consulting, and Trinity College and Wycliffe College.

### Synod approves council's report

Synod approved Synod Council's report to Synod. The report covers Synod Council's activities from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Highlights include the *Cast and Learn* grant program and the master agreement that sets out a process and fee structure and defines the framework for working with Kindred Works, a property developer.

### Missional and Outreach Moment

These moments, held throughout Synod, highlight missional and outreach ministries that are happening in the diocese. In this moment, Synod watched a video on *Hiking Church*, a service and walk in which participants experience God through the great outdoors. *Hiking Church* was created by the Bishop's Committee on Creation Care.



### OHC Brothers receive standing ovation

Br. Reginald-Martin Crenshaw and Br. David Bryan Hoopes of the Order of the Holy Cross led mid-day prayers. Bishop Asbil informed Synod that the Holy Cross Priory was closing in May 2024 after several decades of service. The Brothers, including Br. Leonard Abbah, received a standing ovation for their faithful service over the years.

### Synod endorses *Cast the Net*

After mid-day prayers and lunch, Synod heard a presentation about *Cast the Net*, the diocese's visioning and strategy process that has been underway since the summer of 2022. The *Cast the Net* consultants and steering committee members were introduced. They included Canon Ian Alexander, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, Canon Anita Gittens, the Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Falby, David Toyce, ODT, the Rev. Dr. Alvarado Adderley, Cormac Culkeen, the Rev. Canon Andrew Federle, Tina George, Eirene Wee and the Rev. Deborah Wilson. The presentation included a video about *Cast the Net* and its vision. At the heart of the vision is **The Good News of Jesus Christ**. *We are followers of Jesus Christ, whose Good News is the joy and challenge at the heart of our common life*. Surrounding the core are four other aspects of the vision:

- **Renewing Spirituality.** *We are renewed daily in our spiritual lives and share our faith with others.*
- **Inspiring Faith in Action.** *We seek justice for all, walk alongside those in need, and respond with loving service and prophetic advocacy.*
- **Reimagining Ministry** – both lay and ordained. *We support and encourage faithful and fruitful ministry by all who serve the life of the Church.*
- **Transforming Diocesan Culture.** *We live and work as the Body of Christ, each member connected to the whole, and each valued for their unique gifts.*

*Cast the Net's* vision and its 20 calls can be summed up in one line, which is both invitational and imperative: *Followers of Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, serve the world God loves!* Synod heard that the calls are to all parts of the diocese, not just the Synod Office or the parishes. Synod learned about the timetable for *Cast the Net*, its listening process and the 20 calls. Synod adopted the following motion: "It is moved by the Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Falby and seconded by Dave Toyce, ODT, that this Synod endorse the vision and calls for the diocese developed



Br. Reginald-Martin Crenshaw and Br. David Bryan Hoopes of the Order of the Holy Cross receive a standing ovation from Synod members for the Order's long service to the diocese. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON

through the *Cast the Net* diocesan-wide consultation process; and delegate to Synod Council, working with the *Cast the Net* team, the completion of a final report and detailed recommendations, for distribution throughout the diocese in the first quarter of 2024."

For more information on *Cast the Net*, see Page 12.

### Synod hears about Pilot Governance Project

Chancellor Marg Creal made the following presentation: "If you attended the Pre-Synod meeting, I appreciate your patience as I repeat some important information, as I believe it is crucial for all members to hear. Our journey spans seven years, and I'll walk you through the timeline:

- 2017: The Governance and Decision-Making Working Group was established under the strategic plan, *Growing in Christ 2016-2021*.
- 2019: The Working Group's report and recommendations were considered by Synod. A motion for a pilot project was approved in principle, but changes to The Constitution were defeated. The matter was referred to the next Regular Session of Synod.
- 2021: Synod approved motions allowing changes to the diocese's governance structure. The two-year pilot project included: amalgamation of Diocesan Council and Executive Board into Synod Council; Synod Council, consisting of 25-27 members; formation of five committees: Audit,

Finance, Property, Human Resources, and Risk and Governance; amalgamation of existing committees; delegation of decision-making authority to committees with parameters set by Synod and Synod Council.

- Jan. 1, 2022: Synod Council was established, and all five committees were operational.
- February 2022: Synod Council approved a policy defining decision-making authority for Synod Council and its committees.
- June 2022: Governance structure evaluation was initiated by Joy Packham, ODT, and Robert Hart, ODT, with positive responses and support for the Synod Council structure.
- November 2022: Synod received the Governance Review report.
- May 2023: A further Governance Review was submitted, recommending Synod Council's permanence, pending clear communication to the diocese about its structure and the committees' structure and mandate.

Synod adopted the following motion: "It is moved by Sheila Robson, ODT, and seconded by the Rev. Canon Lisa Newland that Synod receive the Governance Review report dated May 12, 2023."

### Synod approves Constitution and Canon changes

Chancellor Marg Creal made the following presentation. "The Constitution and Canons Committee diligently considers



**ALL TOGETHER**

Worship, display tables, food, singing, music, presentations, friendship and more are all part of Synod 2023, held at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North hotel in Richmond Hill on Nov. 17-18. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON



# It is the Lord who has brought

BY BISHOP ANDREW ASBIL

God, take our lips and speak through them. Take our minds and think through them. Take our hearts and fill them with love for you. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

*Stands on the Rock (Peter) and the other followers of Creator Sets Free (Jesus) were all gathered there.* (First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament) And so we are gathered here. It is so, so, so good to finally be gathered together in one place. It is so good to be in a familiar space that we have not occupied since 2019. It is so good to hear the buzz and chatter of Anglicans gathering in the crush court and gathering around tables and meeting new friends and seeing old friends. It is wonderful to hear Anglicans singing again in harmony and in unison, and not in muffled, semi-muted tones online.

It is wonderful to be able to gather. Chaplains from independent schools, from hospitals, lay readers, lay leaders, deacons, priests, leaders in parishes large and small, from the four corners of this diocese, from the Kawarthas to Mississauga, from Penetanguishene to Brighton. To be able to be in this space. We have longed to be in each other's presence. And in the name of Jesus Christ, welcome.

Bienvenue, bienvenida, bienvenido, ben vindos, Tawow, huanying. All of the languages of the planet of the Earth are also gathered in this place. We may be confined by the borders of a diocese, but we actually come from all over the planet. And we bring our unique gifts, our unique customs, our unique languages and perspectives, and we gather on this traditional land with deep humility, always conscious, as we heard in the land acknowledgement just a few minutes ago, of how our colonial ways of the past – and our colonial ways that persist in the present – continue to bring harm and alienation and hurt to so many. And that we are summoned as collections of communities, together in this diocese, to sow harmony and reconciliation in the name of Jesus Christ.

We come as parishes, some with very long memories – 1797, St. James Cathedral – and some that are just getting started – Church of the Holy Wisdom, 2021. And all the dates in between. One of the great joys of being a bishop is visiting different communities every Sunday and to mark important anniversaries in the life of the community. It's wonderful to go into a community celebrating an anniversary and to hear the stories of the past and the present. To hear from members of the community who will tell you that they were there for the first service in a portable or in somebody's home. Or that they are linked to a family that traces its roots all the way back to the beginning of a parish that streams into the past many, many generations. Or those who are just starting to belong to a community, who speak glowingly about how their lives are being transformed, and how their lives are being literally saved by their faith.

When I go to celebrate anniversaries, an image that I like to place in the midst of a community is to have them imagine if the walls of your church could speak. The stories that they might tell. Imagine if the pews and the kneelers could speak of the prayers that had been uttered heavenward. Or collecting all of the clergy who in time, in their own way, have broken open the Word, have joined hands in matrimony, buried the dead, poured water

on baptism and broken bread and poured out wine and invited a community to step into a sacramental way of living. Imagine the deacons, who have, in their own ways, pointed and proclaimed the gospel and uttered in God's name the invitation to serve the most vulnerable among us. And lay leaders and lay members who in their everyday life say yes to the Kingdom and the realm of God by living out their baptismal covenant. We bring them with us in this space. The communities of which you are a part are here at this Synod with you and with us.

## Standing on the beach

In his book *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, James Smith says, "We live into the stories that absorb us. We become the characters that captivate us. Then our actions become kind of a script. Unconsciously we are drawn in through our imagination." One of the scripts that has captured our imagination over the last 15 months or so is chapter 21 of the Gospel of John. A perfect reading that invites us through a time of COVID to stand on a new threshold on the beach, looking to the future. Of a community that is drawn by God in Jesus, resurrected to new life, that summons us into a future. And so I base this charge back in this same text and using the First Nations version.

In its telling, it brings the story to life with new imagery. Creator Sets Free revealed himself by the Lake of the Circle of Nations, and by the lake also known as the Rolling Waters, this way. In the text, we are told that not all of the disciples were present; only seven, in fact, are named. Some are missing. In the same way, when we gather, we are conscious that there are some members of this Synod who have been longtime members of Synod who are missing, who are not with us. Some who have died, some who have moved on, some who have let go. And we are conscious of the contribution that they have brought to the wider community of Anglicans in this diocese.

In the same way, congregations that have made choices since our last gathering in person, some to close and some to amalgamate to create something new. And we remember that their presence is missed in this room. St. James, Lisle. St. John, Harwood. St. Mark, Warsaw. St. Luke, Dixie South. St. Ninian, St. John the Divine, St. Peter, Scarborough to become Church of the Holy Wisdom. Christ Church, Norwood. Christ Church, Omeme. St. Stephen, Maple. St. Leonard. We remember the faithful witness of gathered communities over a stretch of time that have contributed to the life in their context and to our wider lives, too.

*Stands on the Rock (Peter)* says, "I'm going fishing." And the others said, "We'll go with you." And they pushed their canoe onto the lake. And they worked all night long under the light of the moon and the stars. And they threw their nets, and they gathered them in. Empty.

We know something of the experience of feeling empty over the last three years of COVID, of emptying out our buildings, of emptying out the streets in our communities, of emptying out our places of employment, of emptying out our schools, of emptying out our stores. We have lived the length of time on empty.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the joy of celebrating a new ministry, the beginning of a new ministry at St. Matthew, Oriole. It was a wonderful event for the whole community and for Sherri Goliski. At the end of the service, a few of us were standing



Bishop Andrew Asbil delivers his Charge to Synod, rooted in the scripture passage John 21. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

in the worship space, and I looked down on the ground and there on the carpet was an arrow. And there was another one over here and another one over there, a reminder of what it took to take direction to get to the table in the three-year period. Sherri said, "You know, we lifted the tape from that arrow. But the sun faded the rest of the carpet." And it has left an indelible stamp in the carpet itself, in the same way that the experience has left an indelible mark on us, the likes of which we haven't yet fully comprehended.

## Casting our net

Cast your net on the other side, the right side. We cast our net in COVID in new and creative ways. When the churches emptied out, we went online and we tried new skills, as awkward as we could, used our best audio-visual skills, tried to sound like CBC – that didn't work. Tried other narrators – that didn't work, either. We learned to visit in a parking lot or in a park or in somebody's front yard. We learned to deal with the horrors and the hurt of losing so many people, especially in long-term care homes. And we deal with the long-term legacy that has affected our mental health, especially amongst our young and our elderly, and the effects of long-term COVID. We still have not wrestled with all that has happened to us, and yet we also cast the net, I would say,

by being more honest with each other. More vulnerable with each other. Of having different kinds of conversations at clericus. Different kinds of conversations at parish council. Different kinds of conversations amongst friends and family and around the table of the College of Bishops.

Suddenly you can imagine that net being filled with 153 fish. And it is John who says, "It is the Lord."

There have been moments in the last three years when we, as communities large and small, wondered if COVID would ever end. And there have been moments when, if you're anything like me, running on empty, still having the sense that somehow it is God's voice that whispers to us again and again: "Peace. Be still and know. It is the Lord."

It is the Lord who has brought us to this moment in time. We have not done this all on our own. It is Jesus who has summoned us and the Holy Spirit who has bound us together. As the disciples were hauling in 153 fish, the Diocese of Toronto has been hauling in 202 congregations up back onto the beach to dry out. Like Peter, many of us have felt sodden. Burned out, tired, crackly. We have felt so tired as members of the laity, as wardens, as treasurers, as clergy, who have held the thing together seemingly forever. And now as we come back onto the beach, we

# us to this moment in time



sort through our congregations, and some of them are smaller and some of them are the same size and some of them are bigger, praise God. And some people are missing, but new people are coming. And it is specifically in this moment that we have asked ourselves to enter into a visioning process.

## Casting visions

The other bishops will tell you, as I tell you, that over the last number of months as we go through and we visit parishes, there is a lightness and a gladness that is slowly but surely beginning to return. I don't think we've quite figured out the Peace yet. Never really sure what we do now with the Peace. Do we shake hands? Do we keep bowing? Do we hug? It's a little like adolescents at the school dance. Haven't quite figured it out. It takes a while to get your land legs back.

But it's the perfect time, as a whole community, to cast visions and seek how God is calling us. And we are so grateful to all of our consultants. To Canon Ian Alexander, to Dean Peter Elliott, to Dr. Anita Gittens, ODT. To Dr. Kathleen Johnson and to our steering committee, so wonderfully led by the Rev. Dr. Alison Falby and Dave Toycen, ODT.

Listening takes discipline. It's not easy to listen. In August of 1993, our then-primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, was

invited to the National Native Convocation in Minaki. And he was given really strict instructions to listen to the stories and the legacy of hurt and abuse at Residential Schools. He would be given an opportunity to speak at the end. And Archbishop Michael once said that was one of the most helpful instructions to be given. Because when we think we're listening, we're actually formulating our response. But when we allow ourselves to listen, we are absorbed into the telling. And the absorption in the telling would lead to an apology that would set a course for all of us as we move into the future, knowing that we are agents of change and reconciliation.

In the same way as you have participated in this listening process with us, on this journey of casting the net, we bring now images and a report of what it is that has been heard, in the same way that Peter in our reading was invited into a listening process with Jesus after breakfast. I find it wonderful, the way they tell the story. The Creator Sets Free used the family name that was given to him, One Who Hears (Simon). One Who Hears. Those who have ears, hear. Seven times it appears in the gospels, eight times in the Book of Revelation. When we have ears, hear. Sometimes you have to be asked not once, not twice, but three times. Tend. Feed. Feed.

Some of us in this room are parts of communities who have heard the hunger pangs in our communities. Like St. Paul on-the-Hill in Pickering that started a food bank in 1990 and watch the use of that food bank go up exponentially – 7,800 members in 2012, 14,000 in 2021, over 20,000 in 2022. One hundred families, 150 seniors in Flemington Park enjoy free fresh produce that is grown at the Common Table Farm at Our Saviour in Don Mills. Just two examples of communities in the diocese who hear the hunger pangs in their communities and respond with love. Love equals food, food equals love. Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me?

It takes a while for One Who Hears, Peter, Stands on the Rock, to read and to listen between the lines. Some would say, as theologians, that we go back to that moment before the crucifixion, when Peter would deny Jesus three times. It is a sewing and amending of an old relationship and a moment of forgiveness. Yup. But I like the interpretation of Dr. Caroline Lewis, who says it's a waking-up moment for Peter to understand who he really is, what his identity is in the resurrected Lord, as a follower and as a disciple. It's Jesus saying, "Peter, it's your turn to stand on the rock."

## Spiritual renewal

The same is asked of us. It's one thing for us to say to our circle of family and friends, "I go to church." It's another to say to a circle of family and friends, "I'm really involved at a church. I go to this thing called Synod. How do you spell that?" It's quite another thing to say, "I am a follower of Jesus. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ."

We heard that again and again and again in this listening process: a deep desire that we deepen our spiritual renewal and our call to discipleship. And so as we stand on the beach in the Diocese of Toronto, an invitation to step into a season of renewal. A season when we come together in parishes and regional groups, in small groups and large groups, to pray, to be reconciled, to learn, to teach, to worship, to sing, in small groups and large groups. To be taught, to hear teachers from outside the diocese, within the diocese. To be tended and fed in our souls. And we have asked the Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Paulsen to be the coordinator of this Season of Renewal, and we will be forming a steering committee to get us started so that we begin after this Synod that takes us through to 2025.

We walked the road with Jesus. What you will hear in the presentation, I hope, from those who have been doing the listening process, a simplified little format that you can put in your hand, a handheld device almost like a compass, that reminds us of how we find our way home. In simple terms that remind us we are disciples of Jesus Christ, whose good news is the joy and the challenge at the heart of our common life. And we want to be able to hear from you your feedback and also to embrace this as we go.

## Children & youth

We heard through our listening, or at least I did, a need and a deep desire to bolster our ministry amongst children and youth. As we change and orient ourselves again with areas and territories to make sure that the budget that we have for youth ministry in each of the areas is embedded in our budget for the diocese. To be able to encourage the creative use

of resources like the Ignite program in Scarborough Deanery, where 13 parishes come to work together to pray and to bolster and to support our youth ministry. There are youth members in the room with us. Can I hear an Amen?

## Creation care

What a wonderful telling in this gospel version. Piercing through the reading, you can hear creation, under the light of the moon and the stars. The sounds of the water lapping in the background, the sounds of water birds heard in the distance, the feeling of the warmth of the sun as it rises. A reminder to us that all that we do needs to bring creation not in the background, but into the foreground of everything that we do as servants of Christ. To take a page from the Gospel of Mark that says, "Proclaim good news to the whole of creation." Not just to two-legged mammals, but the whole of creation, every creature, land, sea, water. To proclaim good news to watersheds, to creeks, to lakes, to rivers, to valleys, to forests. For the sake of life, and for the seventh generation to come.

## Anti-racism and addressing bias

I am grateful to Bishop Kevin, who has served as our Diversity Officer these last two years, and for the Bishop's Committee on Intercultural Communities. And for those who have worked with Co: Culture Collective in designing a way and strategy forward in how we address issues of racism and bias in our community. And we will be working alongside Bishop Riscylla, who takes over as Diversity Officer, and also to hire a part-time staff person with the skills to help us enfold this new strategy. It's a small step, but it will grow as we strengthen together.

## Planting new seeds and dreams

For 10 years, Dave Krause served as a consultant in Congregational Development, and now he becomes our Diocesan Missioner, working alongside the College of Bishops as well as Congregational Development in helping us to imagine new communities, new ways of gathering in worship, new ways of working in regions, new ways that God is calling us to plant seedlings of new communities that brings laughter, joy and possibility. Just ask Sarah.

## Property and ministry

We're delighted that Mac Moreau has come on as our director of Property Resources, and working with our executive director, Canon Rob Saffrey and the members of the Property Committee, putting into flesh the desires of Synod in being able to develop and redevelop our church properties for ministry on the frontline, whether that is housing or other developments that we need to address the issues that face us and challenge us as communities.

## Brasilia

Later today you will be introduced to the bishop of the Diocese of Brasilia, Bishop Mauricio. He and I have been having conversations online about deepening our relationship and forming a companionship between our two dioceses. His flight was delayed because of the storm in Sao Paulo. He arrived at 5:35 this morning,

# Let go, encourage others, says bishop

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didn't sleep a wink on the plane. But he will be offering a workshop later today, and our guest speaker tonight. I'm looking very much forward to a deepening relationship together. We have one of the largest Lusophone communities in the world. And an opportunity for us to plant new community here in the Diocese of Toronto.

## Letting go

"When you get older, someone else is going to dress you and take you where you don't want to go." Now I don't know about you, but I understand that Jesus was telling Peter the death by which he would die. But I hear it a different way. It's very difficult to give away and to let go. But to be a Good Shepherd and a good leader, you need to learn the art of giving it away in order to include and invite different perspectives, different points of view. To expand our episcopal leadership by having fewer bishops and engaging archdeacons and a canon administrator and to invite our regional deans to participate at a deeper level and to invite the whole community of every Anglican church in this diocese to learn the art of what it means to let go, to give permission and to invite others to take on. That's not just for bishops to do, or archdeacons or regional deans. That's for clergy, and it's for matriarchs and for patriarchs, too. To make room. And there are going to be things that will happen in your parish that you probably won't like very much. And it might make you feel a little uncomfortable, and you may learn a thing or two. And that's OK.

As I've said many times before, Meister



**Bishop Asbil delivers his charge to Synod. The podium is draped in a net to reflect the theme of Synod and the diocese's visioning and strategic process, Cast the Net, based on John 21. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON**

Eckhart, the long-ago mystic, said the soul grows by subtraction, not by addition. It is in letting go and encouraging others to become part of that the realm of God is made known in our midst.

## Capital campaign

And one more thing that almost sends chills, or helps us break into hives as Anglicans, is this notion. When I imagine standing on this beach looking into the future, in helping to sustain ministry and to make the kinds of turns and changes that we need to, to help the most vulnerable communities among us and to strengthen the strongest, we need to engage in a capital campaign. That landed well. I know that's hard, and I know asking for money is not an easy thing for Anglicans. But I also know that we continue to

benefit from Our Faith-Our Hope. We are still able to seed vital ministry because of the last campaign. And this one is to be designed so that most of the funding remains in parishes to help at the frontline. I would invite you to engage in a feasibility study near the end of 2024 to imagine how God is calling us to build resources for ministry into the future.

## Deep gratitude

But I must say, more than anything, I feel deep, deep, deep gratitude for being here in this space with you. And I am grateful for all those who have worked with me over these last number of years, especially the College of Bishops. To my colleagues Riscylla and Kevin, for your deep gifts and hard work at a time of transition, taking on way more than you could

ever ask or imagine. To our archdeacons and our canon administrator taking on a whole new role. To our executive director, Rob Saffrey. To all of the staff at 135 Adelaide. To Mary Conliffe and Jenn Bolender King, who organize and keep me organized and remind me of my purpose. It's good to be reminded. For every cleric in this room, for every lay leader in our parishes, deep and profound gratitude for the sacrifices you have made to help us get to this point in time. And finally, just a word of deep gratitude to my wife, Mary. For standing with me through the good and the hard, and always bringing such deep joy and reminding me of the call that we are all summoned to.

So, as they would say in the First Nations Version, let's hit the road with Jesus. Amen.

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amendments or revisions to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese as they arise and reports on how best such revisions or amendments may be incorporated into the Constitution and Canons. A summary of the proposed changes are as follows:

"Changes to The Constitution s. 15(4) and Canon 13 s. 4(6)(a) are being made to add the Executive Director as a secondary signing officer when the Treasurer and Director of Finance is unavailable. There is also a housekeeping change in Canon 13 to replace 'Area' with 'Suffragan.'

"As a result of making the new governance changes permanent, s. 35 of The Constitution, and Canons 2, 5, 31, 36, 37, 39 all have proposed revisions. Additionally, it is proposed that Canon 3 be deleted in its entirety. "And finally, as our diocese grows into its new structure, comprised of five archdeaconries instead of the traditional four episcopal areas, there are a couple of instances where we need to suspend canons to allow for flexibility."

Synod approved the following motions dealing with the Constitution and Canons:

- Motion #5A: It is moved by Chancellor Marg Creal and seconded by Vice Chancellor Paul Baston that Synod approve the changes to The Constitu-

tion, as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.

- Motion #5B: It is moved by Chancellor Marg Creal and seconded by Vice Chancellor Paul Baston that Synod approve the changes to Canon 13 as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.
- Motion #5C: It is moved by Chancellor Marg Creal and seconded by Vice Chancellor Paul Baston that Synod approve the changes to The Constitution, s.35, Canons 2, 5, 31, 36, 37, 39, and delete Canon 3 in its entirety, as they relate to implementing the new governance structure, as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.
- Motion #5D: It is moved by Chancellor Marg Creal and seconded by Vice Chancellor Paul Baston that Synod approve the changes to The Constitution, s.3(17) and suspend Canons 43 and 44 until the next Regular Session of Synod, as they relate to areas and area council, as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.
- Motion #5E: It is moved by Chancellor Marg Creal and seconded by Vice

Chancellor Paul Baston that Synod approve the changes to Canon 14 as recommended for approval by Synod Council and presented in the Convening Circular.

## Missional and Outreach Moment

Synod watched a video about the Scarborough Steeplechase, a 10 km scavenger hunt starting at Holy Trinity, Guildwood and ending at St. Timothy, Agincourt. The steeplechase involves several church teams and raises funds for PWRDF.

## Synod members attend breakout groups

Synod members attended breakout groups on the following subjects: wills, estates and tax – why we all need an end-of-life plan; discerning vocations; where have all the volunteers gone?; children's ministry conversation starters; Lusophone ministry in the Diocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Brasilia; regional ministry approaches; parish finances; and property mandate from Synod.

## Banquet features guest speaker

Synod enjoyed a dinner, and the Rt. Rev. Maurício Jose Araujo De Andrade, bishop of the Diocese of Brasilia, was the guest speaker. Bishop Andrade brought greetings from the people of the Diocese of Brasilia. He spoke about his hopes for the companionship program between the Diocese of Toronto and the Diocese of Brasilia. "Partnership is our strength," he said, adding that the dioceses can do much together to serve their communities. He spoke about the diversity of both dioceses and the mission of God in their communities. "Our mission is to announce the Church of God to the world of God." For the full story, see Page 11.

## New canons announced

Bishop Asbil named the following as honorary canons of St. James Cathedral:

- The Rev. Canon Julie Burn, Church of the Resurrection
- The Rev. Canon Andrea Christensen, St. Timothy, Agincourt
- The Rev. Canon Alison Falby, All Saints, Sherbourne St.
- The Rev. Canon Andrew Federle, St. Clement, Eglinton
- Canon Anita Gittens, St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale

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# Let's dream together: Brasilia bishop

## Dioceses explore partnership

BY MARTHA HOLMEN

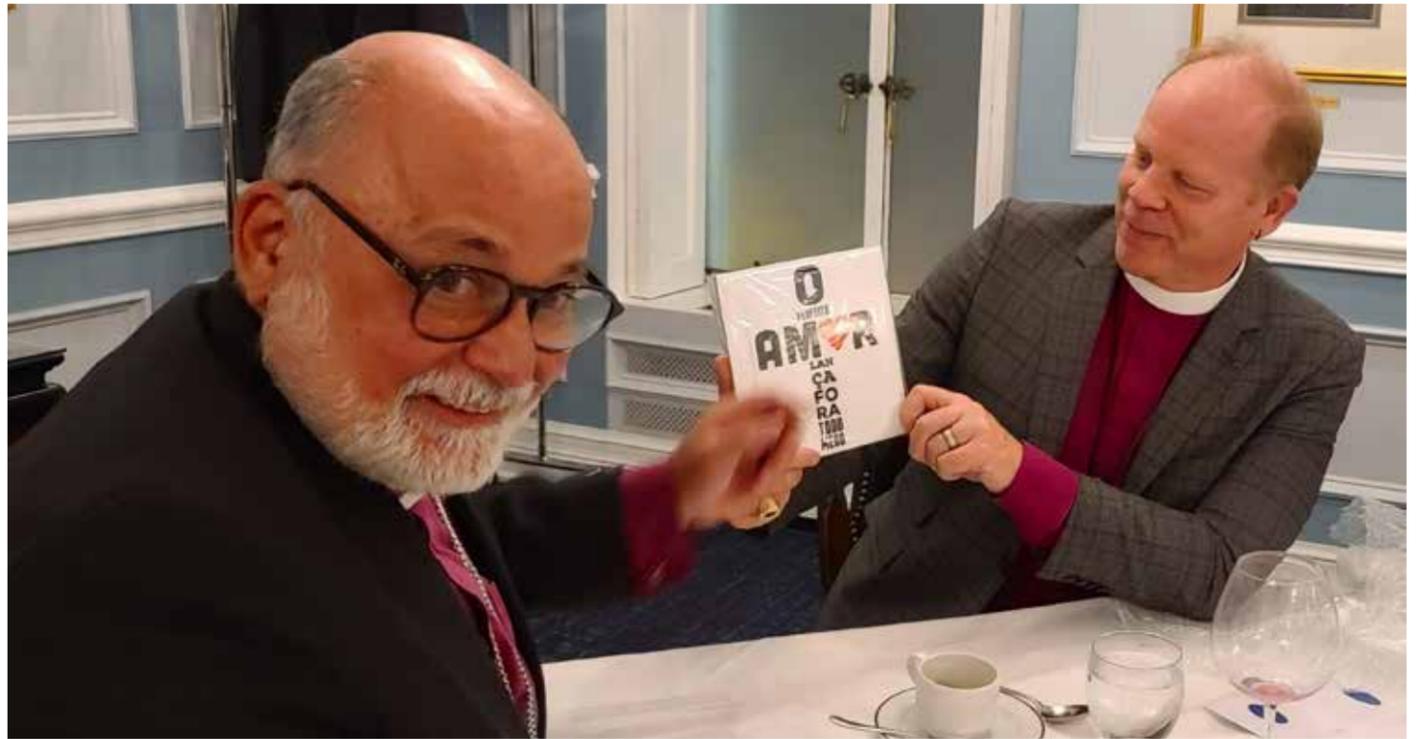
The Diocese of Toronto recently welcomed a special guest, with the hope of soon establishing a companion relationship with Anglicans 7,300 km away. The Rt. Rev. Maurício Jose Araujo De Andrade, bishop of the Diocese of Brasilia, was the guest speaker at the diocese's 162nd regular session of Synod in November, where he spoke of his dreams of a partnership with Toronto.

After a storm delayed their incoming flight by 24 hours, Bishop Andrade and his wife Sandra visited Toronto from Nov. 17-22. They spent two days at Synod and attended St. James Cathedral on Nov. 19, where Bishop Andrade preached at the 11 a.m. service.

Bishop Andrew Asbil hopes the visit will lead to a companionship program between the Diocese of Brasilia and the Diocese of Toronto. "The hope is that we start learning from each other and finding ways of visiting each other's contexts and building on that partnership together," he says. "I think it's really an exciting time for us in the Diocese of Toronto. We are so multicultural and so diverse when it comes to language, culture and tradition, and this gives us another opportunity to spread our wings."

The Diocese of Brasilia is one of nine dioceses and a missionary district in the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil. Located in central Brazil, its mission is "to be a missionary church, instruments in announcing and witnessing to the Kingdom of God through example and words; to live in diversity and inclusiveness in our way of being Anglican, becoming part of the social, cultural context of our communities." Its vision is "to be bold and dynamic in witnessing to the gospel and in missionary action in the promotion of life, serving in love, faithfulness and solidarity."

Bishop Andrade spoke to Synod at the



Bishop Mauricio Jose Araujo De Andrade of the Diocese of Brasilia (left) presents a plaque to Bishop Andrew Asbil during his visit to the Diocese of Toronto. The text of the plaque is 1 John 4:18: "Perfect love casts out fear" in Portuguese. PHOTO BY THE REV. CANON MAURICE FRANCOIS

banquet dinner on Friday evening, bringing greetings from the clergy and people of the Diocese of Brasilia. "They are at this moment praying for this Synod," he said. He spoke about the similarities he had noticed between Toronto and Brasilia, two cosmopolitan centres "where people of diverse religion come together in community."

He shared his hopes for partnership between the Diocese of Brasilia and the Diocese of Toronto. He said collaboration between the two dioceses would be "an opportunity to join forces to promote the mission of God in both cities" and "to announce the Church of God to the world of God" in joint projects where the love of Christ becomes visible.

Bishop Andrade also spoke of what he called a missing Beatitude: blessed are those who dream. "I invite you all to dream together," he said. "We can seek to dream

together for the new work that is possible."

Although the Diocese of Brasilia has only four parishes, it can teach the Diocese of Toronto a lot about mission work, says Bishop Asbil. "There are many lessons we can learn from the Diocese of Brasilia about frontline ministry in small communities. They can help us think about what it means to be mission-oriented in a new time. Many of our congregations are small and how do we reinvigorate our mission in a new way, and what will it look like?"

In addition to his remarks after dinner, Bishop Andrade joined the Rev. Canon Maurice Francois in leading a workshop for Synod members about Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) ministry. Canon Francois leads Lusophone communities at Parroquia San Esteban, located at Holy Trinity, Trinity Square, and at St. Mary Magdalene.

The diocese is celebrating the 25th anniversary of Lusophone ministry in Toronto, currently the only such Anglican ministry in Canada. The city of Toronto has the largest Portuguese-speaking population in the world among countries where Portuguese is not an official language.

Bishop Asbil says a companionship program would help the Diocese of Toronto serve newcomers from South America and Central America. "We have a growing Lusophone community here in the Diocese of Toronto, so Bishop Mauricio's presence is really going to help us formulate that."

Bishop Andrade spoke again briefly at the conclusion of Synod. "It has been a great joy for me to share in learning about you," he said. He also invited Bishop Asbil to visit the Diocese of Brasilia in the coming months as the two dioceses work toward a formal partnership.

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- The Rev. Canon David Bryan Hoopes, Order of the Holy Cross
- Canon Janet Marshall, director of Congregational Development
- The Rev. Canon Rob Mitchell, St. Olave, Swansea
- The Rev. Canon Lisa Newland, Christ Church, Stouffville
- The Rev. Canon Jesse Parker, St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope
- The Rev. Canon Mark Regis, St. Mary and St. Martha
- The Rev. Canon Kevin Wong, All Saints, Markham

### Day concludes with prayer

The first day of Synod concluded with prayers led by the Bishop's Youth Ministry Committee.

## DAY 2

### Financial statements approved

After Morning Prayer led by the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, Synod reconvened and received the audited financial statements for the

Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto and the Cemetery Fund for 2022. Synod also approved the appointment of Grant Thornton LLP, chartered accountants, to conduct the audit of the financial statements for the year ended Dec. 31, 2023, at a fee to be approved by the Audit Committee.

### Priorities and Plans approved

Synod members watched a presentation of the Diocese's Priorities and Plans for the next two years and the financial budgets for 2024 and 2025. Synod approved the following motion: "It will be moved by Sheila Robson, ODT and seconded by the Rev. Canon Lisa Newland that Synod receive the document entitled Priorities and Plans 2024 & 2025 and approve the priorities and the financial budget contained therein and that Synod Council report back to Synod on this plan. It will be further moved that Synod approve that the Assessment Rate, as defined in Canon 4, remain at 24.7% for 2024 and 2025."

### Missional and Outreach Moment

Synod watched a video about The Common Table, Church of the Redeemer's drop-in community.

### Members elected

Synod elected the following members to Synod Council, Provincial Synod and General Synod:

#### Synod Council

Synod Council generally exercises the executive powers of Synod between sessions except those of a legislative character. The 25-member governance body meets monthly to carry on the work of Synod. Elected members hold office from the conclusion of the meeting of Synod in which they were elected until the conclusion of the next Regular Session of Synod, usually a three-year term. Synod elected the following:

- The Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields (St. James Cathedral)
- The Rev. Lucia Lloyd (St. John, Bowmanville)
- The Rev. Graham McCaffrey (St. Dunstan of Canterbury)
- The Rev. Mark Regis (St. Mary & St. Martha, Toronto)
- The Rev. Philip Stonhouse (St. Matthew, Islington)
- Lawrence Barker (St. Luke, Burnt River)
- Heather McGregor, ODT (St. Mary Magdalene)

- David Toyce, ODT (Trinity Church, Streetsville)
- Canon Laura Walton, ODT (Holy Trinity, Clearview)
- Eirene Wee (St. Paul, Bloor Street)
- Adam Nymann (St. John the Evangelist, Peterborough), youth member

#### General Synod

General Synod meets every three years, and the term of office for a member is three years. The term of office begins at the General Synod in 2025 and continues until the next General Synod. The Diocese of Huron will host the next General Synod in London, Ont. The following were elected:

- The Rev. Canon Philip Der (St. Christopher)
- The Rev. Yohan Dumpala (St. John the Baptist, Norway)
- The Rev. Canon Dr. Stephen Fields (St. James Cathedral)
- The Rev. Lucia Lloyd (St. John, Bowmanville)
- The Rev. Canon Nicola Skinner (Grace Church, Markham)
- The Rev. Brian Suggs (All Saints, Kingsway)
- The Rev. Canon Claudette Taylor (Epiphany and St. Mark, Parkdale)

Continued on Page 12

# Synod endorses vision, calls

Synod endorsed Cast the Net's vision and 20 calls to all parts of the diocese. The vision and calls will help guide the diocese as it seeks to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next five years. The vision comprises five elements. At the centre is the Good News of Jesus Christ. The four other elements are Renewing Spirituality, Inspiring Faith in Action, Transforming Diocesan Culture and Reimagining Ministry. Each is accompanied by a "we" statement and related calls to the diocese. The vision and calls can be summed up in the following imperative sentence: "Followers of Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, serve the world God loves!"

## The Good News of Jesus Christ

We are disciples of Jesus Christ, whose Good News is the joy and challenge at the heart of our common life.

## Renewing Spirituality

We are renewed daily in our spiritual lives and share our faith with others. In that spirit, all parts of the Diocese of Toronto are called to:

1. Enter into a Season of Spiritual Renewal to deepen personal and collective discipleship.
2. Reinvigorate and recommit to children's, youth, family and intergenerational ministries.
3. Share and use resources to enliven worship, faith formation, spiritual practice and evangelism.

## Inspiring Faith in Action

We seek justice for all, walk alongside those in need, and respond with loving service and prophetic advocacy. In that spirit, all parts of the diocese are called to:

4. Recognize and act on opportunities to participate in God's healing work in the world.
5. Make explicit connections



Graphic shows the five elements of Cast the Net's vision. They are accompanied by calls to all parts of the diocese. GRAPHIC BY ANDERS CARLEN

6. Strengthen Indigenous ministry; engage non-Indigenous Anglicans in reconciliation work.
7. Take, sustain and communicate actions that promote diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism.
8. Intensify advocacy and action in response to the climate crisis.

## Reimagining Ministry

We support and encourage faithful and fruitful ministry by all who serve the life of the church. In that spirit, all parts of the diocese are called to:

9. Actively embrace collaboration among congregations and innovation in new forms of ministry.
10. Better reflect the diversity

11. Understand the changing needs of lay leaders in congregations and support them in their work.
12. Continue and enhance support for all ordained people.
13. Enable and celebrate the work of ministries focused on service in the world.
14. Rethink clergy discernment, formation, and deployment for the church of the future.
15. Introduce and use new ways to measure and nurture congregational health and effectiveness.

## Transforming Diocesan Culture

- We live and work as the Body of Christ, each member connected to the whole, and each valued for their unique gifts. In that spirit, all parts of the diocese are called to:
16. Cultivate an understanding of the diocese as a dynamic net of shared relationships.
  17. Continue assessing recent diocesan leadership changes and adjust as necessary.
  18. Adopt an integrated, theologically informed approach to property management.
  19. Ensure follow-through on this report, including implementation methods and metrics.
  20. Invest in the vision with existing and new resources, using sound Christian stewardship principles.

Continued from Page 11

- Chancellor Marg Creal, KC, (Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street)
- Finn Keesmaat-Walsh (Redeemer, Bloor Street)
- Yvonne Murray, ODT (Holy Wisdom)
- Noah Skinner (Grace Church, Markham)
- David Toyce, ODT (Trinity Church, Streetsville)
- Mary Walsh, ODT (St. John the Baptist, Oak Ridges)
- Canon Laura Walton, ODT (Holy Trinity, Clearview)
- Logan Liut (St. Thomas, Huron Street), youth member

### Provincial Synod

The next Session of the Provincial Synod will take place in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., hosted by the Diocese of Algoma during the week of Sept. 24, 2024 (exact dates not confirmed). The Provincial Synod meets every three years and the term of office is for three years beginning at Provincial Synod 2024. The Provincial Synod meets and considers matters of interest in the provincial sphere such as theological education, social issues, government relations, chaplaincies, and vocational diaconate ministries. The following were elected:

- The Rev. Canon Kit Greaves (Christ Memorial, Oshawa)
- The Rev. Dr. Alison Kemper

- (St. Matthias, Bellwoods)
- The Rev. Brian Suggs (All Saints, Kingsway)
- The Rev. Graham McCaffrey (St. Dunstan of Canterbury)
- Karen Beckles (Epiphany & St. Mark, Parkdale)
- Ryan Ramsden, ODT (Grace Church, Scarborough)
- Susan Schuschu, ODT (St. John, East Orangeville)
- Canon Laura Walton, ODT (Holy Trinity, Clearview)
- Noah Skinner, Grace Church, Markham (youth member)

### Substitute members:

- Finn Keesmaat-Walsh
- Lawrence Barker

## Missional and Outreach Moment

Synod watched a video from All Saints, Peterborough about its various ministries and activities.

## Motion withdrawn

A motion dealing with the development of affordable housing by the diocese was withdrawn by its mover as Synod ran out of time to discuss it. Bishop Asbil said he would ask Synod Council to explore other ways that the diocese can address the issue of affordable housing development.

## Guest speaker reflects

Bishop Maurício Andrade said he enjoyed being at Synod and looked forward to the Diocese of Brasilia and the Diocese of Toronto working and sharing together in a companionship program. He invited Bishop Asbil and Anglicans to visit his Diocese.

## Honorary secretaries elected

The following were elected honorary secretaries of Synod for the ensuing two-year term; the Rev. Canon Lisa Newland, honorary clerical secretary; Constance Kendall, ODT, honorary lay secretary; the Rev. Jason Prisley, assistant honorary clerical secretary.

## Bishop gives closing remarks

In his closing remarks, Bishop Asbil thanked all those who worked on and participated in Cast the Net. Like the disciples on the beach in John 21, "we have been through the turbulence but God is calling us into a new way together," he said. "Meeting here together has been an absolute tonic to the soul. To hear the chatter and buzz and excitement of Anglicans coming together after so long has been such a gift, and to know that we have a lot of work to do in our communities large and small across the diocese, and to pledge that we will move

together and change together and grow together to become the next self that will be built on trust and working together as communities." Bishop Asbil thanked all those who made Synod possible. He also thanked Sheila Robson, ODT, who was stepping down from her role as honorary lay secretary of Synod at the conclusion of this session. She has served in this capacity since 2021.

## Synod concludes

Synod concluded with a prayer.



# Diocese considers capital campaign

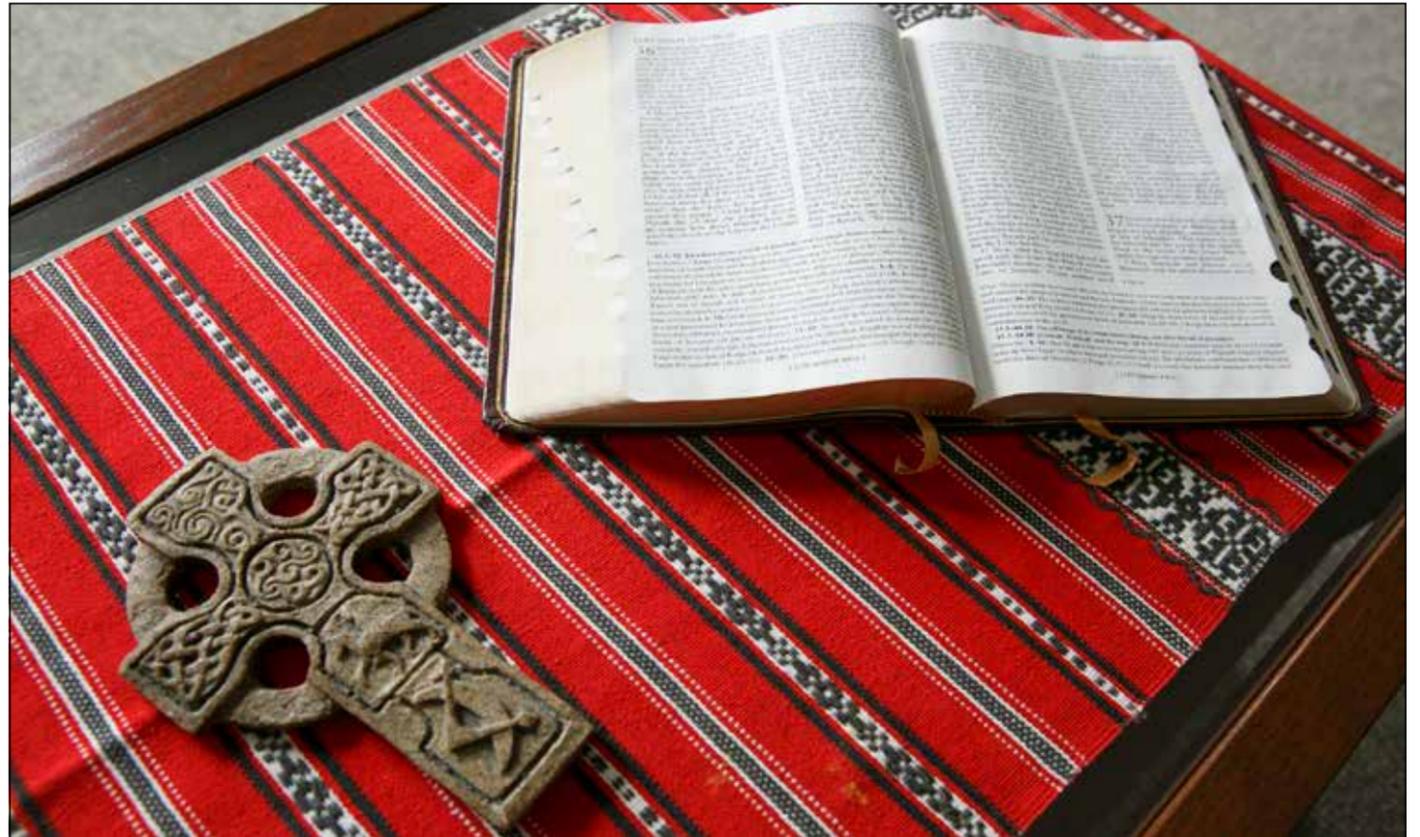
*In his Charge to Synod, Bishop Andrew Asbil spoke about the diocese holding a capital campaign, the first since Our Faith-Our Hope nearly 15 years ago. "When I imagine standing on this beach looking into the future, in helping to sustain ministry and to make the kinds of turns and changes that we need to, to help the most vulnerable communities among us and to strengthen the strongest, we need to engage in a capital campaign," he said. After Synod, Stuart Mann of The Anglican sat down with Peter Misiaszek, the diocese's director of Stewardship Development, to discuss the campaign.*

**What is the name of the campaign?**  
It doesn't have one yet. That would be determined after we've done a feasibility study.

**How much does the campaign hope to raise?**  
When we did Our Faith-Our Hope, we raised \$43 million, but not every parish participated. Our hope is that this time the case would be so compelling that participation would be a hundred per cent. If that happens, I think a goal of \$50 million is realistic.

**When will the campaign be held?**  
We need to do a feasibility study first, which we hope to have completed by the second quarter of 2024. We might see something on the ground, in terms of the actual campaign, by the last quarter of 2024.

**Will parishes and individuals be able to give input in shaping the campaign?**  
The feasibility study will be as broad-based as possible. It will probably take three or four months to do, and there will be three levels to it: personal interviews with key stakeholders in the diocese – lay people and clergy; focus groups; and a questionnaire that lists some of the sig-



The primary focus of the capital campaign will be to re-invest in parish ministry, says Peter Misiaszek, the diocese's director of Stewardship Development. PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

nificant items that were identified in the Cast the Net process and people need to identify as their top priorities. We want to get as much feedback as possible because the more people who provide input, the more likely we're going to have an outcome that is compelling.

**Will the campaign be trial-tested before it's rolled out?**  
As we did with Our Faith-Our Hope, the first group of parishes will be the test-case parishes to help us refine the case and determine how we pace ourselves. I

imagine a capital campaign of this size will take two years from beginning to end.

**Why are we having a campaign?**  
Cast the Net, the diocese's strategy process, identified a number of important areas in the diocese that need shoring up and support – and that requires financing. One of the huge benefits of Our Faith-Our Hope was that it provided important resources to parishes at a very critical time, to support their capital projects and ministry needs. We did Our Faith-Our Hope nearly 15 years ago, and the timing seems right to do it again.

**How will the money be spent?**  
Bishop Asbil wants the campaign to be hugely complimentary to parishes. The costs of the campaign will be covered by the diocese, as we did with Our Faith-Our Hope, but the sharing arrangement will be more generous this time around in support of parishes because we want the primary focus to be on reinvesting in parish ministry and parish programs. We expect that most of the funds raised will stay in the parishes. But we want to provide the impetus so this can happen right across the whole diocese.

**Will all parishes be asked to take part?**  
Yes, we're going to ask all 192 parishes in the diocese to make a good faith effort to participate in the campaign.

**Can a parish opt out of the campaign?**  
We want the case to be so compelling and the potential return on investments for parishes to be so encouraging that it makes no sense for a parish to opt out. The sharing arrangement is going to be so favourable to parishes, and the cost in terms of what they have to invest so minimal, they will have everything to gain from it.

**Why doesn't the diocese just sell surplus property to raise the money?**  
Much of our property is held for strategic purposes, and we envision it could be used for short- or long-term housing or a ministry need in the future. There is strategic value to holding on to those resources. After all, our purpose is to be

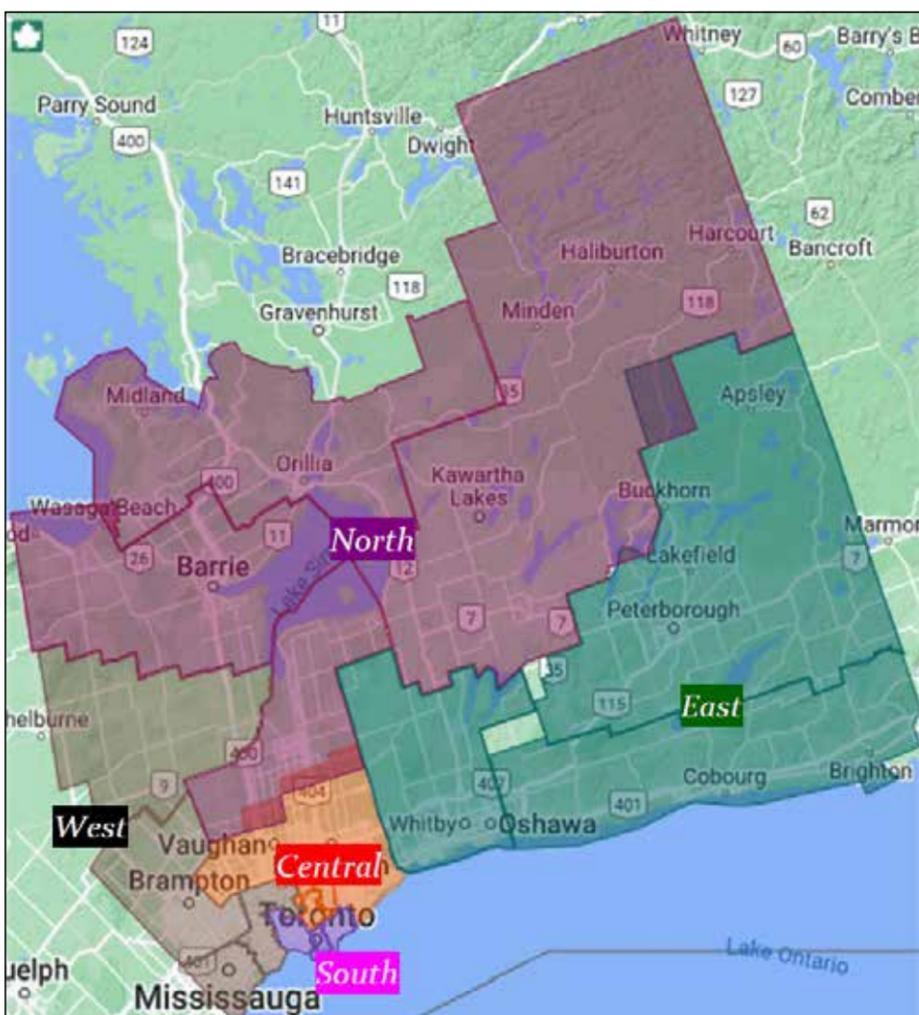
a church where worship and ministry are the priorities, and we need those facilities to enable us to fulfil our mission.

**If my parish did a capital campaign last year, would we be expected to do another one?**  
We would ensure that your parish would be one of the last parishes in the last phase of the campaign. It may be a question of going back to some of the donors and asking them to extend their givings for another year or two.

**Who will conduct the campaign?**  
We haven't determined that. What we learned from Our Faith-Our Hope was that as good as the return was, we need a firm that understands Anglican culture and our diocese and will work closely with us and ensure that the approach is not a one-size-fits-all. We want to be sensitive to different expressions of church in the diocese, whether it be rural or urban. Those things matter when we consider how we're going to conduct a campaign.

**Will parishes get help to do a campaign?**  
Yes, a professional campaign manager will be deployed to work with your parish – to help identify and raise up volunteers and to conduct the campaign over a 12- to 14-week period, with the hope of achieving a goal that is proportionate to your parish's offertory. When we did Our Faith-Our Hope, the parish goal was determined as a percentage of the average of the last three years of parish offertory, and we will use a similar calculation this time around to determine what an appropriate goal is for each parish.

**Can my parish do whatever it wants with the money that we get back?**  
Each parish will be asked to draft its own case for support that would compliment the diocese's case for support, and you might even want to use the same categories. It's important for parishes to ensure that whatever funds they raise go towards the items that they identified as being top of mind in their case for support.



Map of the diocese, home to 192 parishes.

# Breaking down barriers to Bach

## Group brings great music to ordinary audiences

BY SUE CARELESS

A recent poll of 174 living composers called J.S. Bach the “greatest composer of all time.” That would make Bach the Shakespeare of music.

But just as the brilliant stage performances of Shakespeare can seem inaccessible to the average person, so too can the tremendous choral performances of Bach seem out of reach to many people.

One choral group in Toronto has made it its aim to remove those barriers and, at the same time, share Bach’s faith-infused choral legacy with a harried world. The Trinity Bach Project is a baroque vocal and instrumental ensemble dedicated to offering “ordinary audiences the extraordinary musical and spiritual riches of Bach’s choral repertoire.” It describes its vision to “remove barriers of exclusivity around classical choral music and open the doors of sacred places – both historic architecture and human hearts – with Bach’s abiding light.”

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a devout Christian who composed more than 200 sacred cantatas for the Lutheran church in Germany, often at the rate of one a week. These are considered among the treasures of the Western music tradition, yet they are rarely heard. The cost of presenting these profound sacred works, which require period instruments and highly trained vocalists and musicians, limits their availability to contemporary audiences.

While a handful of Bach’s longer works, such as the *St. Matthew Passion*, the *St. John Passion* and the *Mass in B Minor*, are performed live fairly regularly, “the rest of his choral wealth lies dormant, not doing the spiritual work it was intended to do.”

The Trinity Bach Project (TBP) intends to change that. This is how its members are bringing down the barriers of expense, obscurity and elitism:

- The concerts are free. The performers are members of Toronto’s professional music scene and all are paid, but through donations and patron support, not ticket sales.
- The concerts are short, an hour in length without an intermission. Some are held during the lunch hour or mid-afternoon.
- A line-by-line English translation of the German or Latin text is projected as surtitles during performance.
- The venues are historic churches, not huge concert halls or auditoriums, making for a more intimate experi-



The Trinity Bach Project, a professional choral ensemble, at Trinity College’s chapel. PHOTO BY SIMON REMARK

ence. Last year a simple sandwich board outside St. Matthew, First Avenue advertising the free concert was enough to entice one couple who had lived in the neighbourhood for 30 years but had never stepped inside the church.

- The concerts end with the audience joining the professional ensemble in singing a familiar hymn in English. Louise Zacharias Friesen, one of the visionaries behind TBP, says, “We want to invite the audience into the experience. Some have said to us, ‘I haven’t sung in years,’ but they were glad they did.”

Under the umbrella organization Imago Arts, Trinity Bach Project is a joint venture of Louise Zacharias Friesen (artistic director), Nicholas Nicolaidis (music director), Chris Friesen (executive director) and Michelle Odorico (orchestral director). This team is bound together by their Christian faith – they all attend Anglican churches – and by a shared passion for the music of Bach.

Ms. Zacharias Friesen says she wants to invite people to “taste and see that high calibre classical music can communicate to anybody.”

For Mr. Friesen, listening to Bach is like “drinking a cup of spiritual coffee. And you’re longing for your audience to have the same experience.” He finds that music can be a “supra-rational expression of faith,” that it can express more than reason alone.

The project is in its second season, and Mr. Friesen, who is currently pursuing graduate studies at Wycliffe College, handles all the administration involved. “The other important way TBP connects to our faith is in terms of the tremendous adventure of trust it has been to move forward with the project without knowing how we would pay for it,” he says.

Ms. Odorico, who leads the instrumental ensemble, says she’s thrilled to be sharing Bach’s music with audiences “in the spiritual intention with which it was written.” A baroque violinist who has played with Tafelmusik and many other ensembles, she had no trouble finding qualified musicians for this project.

The orchestra, which varies in size from five to 15 members depending on the work being performed, plays on period instruments including organ, violoncello, oboe, viola, traverso flute, trumpet and bassoon.

TBP’s home base is Trinity College Chapel at the University of Toronto. Thomas Bell, director of music and organist at Trinity College, says it has been an absolute delight to host the ensemble. “Their music-making is of the highest quality, a gift to the faculty, staff, students and many visitors to the college. But it is what lies behind their performances that sets the TBP apart as they seek to uncover the faith and spiritual life of J.S. Bach,” he says. “The texts of Bach’s cantatas come alive in their singing – and as a bonus, are projected

onto the wall of the chapel – to create a musical experience full of depth and loveliness. As Bach would have said, *Soli Deo Gloria!*”

TBP’s 2023-24 season will present six different programs in 10 different venues. It has established relationships with several Anglican churches in Toronto (St. Augustine of Canterbury, Grace Church on-the-Hill, St. Matthew, First Avenue and Little Trinity) and one in Hamilton (St. John the Evangelist). It will also perform at Metropolitan United, Timothy Eaton Memorial, Trinity-St Paul, and Holy Family Parish, all in Toronto.

Still under development is a school series to introduce children and youth to the power of Baroque music, a New Sacred Music concert featuring the work of young and local composers who create music in the spirit of Bach, and the concept of a summer Bach festival in Gananoque, midway between Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Syracuse, NY.

“I think Bach wrote this for us,” said one audience member last season. Said another, “I found hope here.” And the ensemble has been told, “You are changing the musical landscape in Toronto.”

Mr. Friesen says the Trinity Bach Project is “on a mission to help re-teach the world – or at least the GTA – Bach’s musical and spiritual language.”

*Sue Careless is a senior editor at the Anglican Planet. This article first appeared in the Anglican Planet.*



Photo adapted from Fizkes/Shutterstock

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## IN MOTION

### Appointments

- The Rev. Siu Chun Leung (Diocese of Hong Kong), Priest-in-Charge, St. Elizabeth, Mississauga, Nov. 1, 2023.
- The Rev. Canon Susan Haig, Honorary Assistant, Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St., Nov. 5, 2023.
- The Rev. Michelle Jones, Incumbent, St. James, Caledon East, Nov. 25, 2023.
- The Rev. Ginnie Wong, Interim Priest-in-Charge, Holy Trinity, Thornhill, Dec. 1, 2023.
- The Rev. Julie Burn, Regional Dean, Toronto East Deanery, Jan. 1.

### Vacant Incumbencies

Clergy from outside the diocese with the permission of their bishop may apply through the Diocesan Executive Assistant, Canon Mary Conliffe.

### Bishop's Direct Appointment Process

- (receiving names):
- St. Cyprian
- Our Saviour
- Christ Church, Scarborough
- Grace Church, Scarborough
- St. Mary, Richmond Hill
- St. George, Haliburton
- St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale
- Christ Church, Bolton
- Trinity-St. Paul, Port Credit

### Parish Selection Committee Process

First Phase - (not yet receiving



## INSPIRED

In November, Penny Nutbrown of St. John the Evangelist, Port Hope, posted a photo on the church's Facebook page of three angels in the parish's presentation of the Christmas Story, a Port Hope tradition for more than 60 years. Just a few days later, Paul Bailey, a local artist known for creating a work of art a day about the town's people and history, posted his interpretation of the photo on his Facebook page, along with all the details of the performance. 'I feel that Paul's paintings are like short stories, with characters and narratives that celebrate the small but important acts that make a place a genuine community,' says Ms. Nutbrown. 'The Daily Bailey posted on Facebook is a first stop for many of us in Port Hope as we log into the internet each day.' PHOTO BY NIKKI COOPER AND PAINTING BY PAUL BAILEY

names):

- Christ Church-St. James
- St. Martin in-the-Fields

Second Phase - (receiving names via Bishop):

- Holy Trinity, Thornhill
- St. John the Baptist, Oak Ridges

Third Phase - (no longer receiving names):

- Grace Church on-the-Hill
- St. George Memorial, Oshawa

### Ordinations

- The Rev. Paige Souter was ordained a Priest at Church of the Redeemer, Bloor St. on Nov. 26, 2023.
- The Rev. Abraham Thomas will be ordained a Priest at St. Peter and St. Simon the Apostle on Feb. 2 at 7 p.m.

### Celebration of New Ministry

- The Very Rev. Dr. Stephen Hance, Dean of Toronto and Rector of St. James Cathedral,

Jan. 14 at 4:30 p.m.

### Conclusions

- The Rev. Christopher Parsons concluded his appointment as Incumbent of St. Paul, Newmarket on Dec. 31, 2023.
- The Rev. Michelle Childs-Ward concluded her appointment as Incumbent of St. George on-the-Hill and Chaplain of Kingsway College School on Dec. 31, 2023.

### Deaths

- The Rev. Anna-Clair Swingler died on Nov. 4, 2023. Ordained deacon in 2001, she served as deacon of St. Leonard in Toronto until her retirement in 2014.

- The Rev. Canon John Thompson died on Nov. 6, 2023. Ordained deacon in 1961 and priest in 1962, he served as assistant curate of Christ Church, Deer Park and took up appointments in the Diocese of Caledonia, the Diocese of Nairobi, the Diocese of Southern Malawi, and the Diocese of Lesotho, where he was made a canon, returning to the Diocese of Toronto in 1984. He served as incumbent of St. Giles, Barrie and Christ Church, Woodbridge, regional dean of Nottawasaga and retired in 1999. His funeral was held on Nov. 13, 2023 at St. Thomas, Belleville.

## PRAYER CYCLE

### FOR JANUARY

- Members of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto
- Order of the Holy Cross Priory
- St. Anne, Toronto
- St. Chad
- St. George by the Grange
- Epiphany and St Mark, Parkdale
- Parkdale-Toronto West Deanery
- St. Hilda, Fairbank
- St. John, West Toronto

- St. Martin-in-the-Fields
- St. Mary and St. Martha
- St. Mary Magdalene
- St. Matthias, Bellwoods
- The New Dean and Canons of St James Cathedral
- St. Michael and All Angels
- St. Olave, Swansea
- St. Paul, Runnymede
- St. Stephen in-the-Fields
- St. Thomas, Huron Street
- The Theological Colleges in the Diocese of Toronto
- Canadian Council of Churches

- All Saints, King City
- Christ Church, Holland Landing
- Christ Church, Kettleby
- Ecumenical Officer for the Diocese of Toronto - the Rev. Canon Philip Hobson
- Christ Church, Roches Point
- Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto (CJDT)
- Holland Deanery
- Parish of Georgina
- St. James the Apostle, Sharon
- St. Mary Magdalene, Schomberg

## LOOKING AHEAD

To submit items for Looking Ahead, email editor@toronto.anglican.ca. The deadline for the February issue is Jan. 1. Parishes can also promote their

events on the diocese's website Calendar at www.toronto.anglican.ca.

### Gatherings

**JAN. 5** - Epiphany Eve Service, 7 p.m., plus The Beauty of Dutch Art, an illustrated feature talk, 7:30 p.m., by Debbie Cowling looking at Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Gogh and

other artists, St. Olave, Bloor Street and Windermere Avenue, Toronto. **FEB. 4** - Choral Evensong for Candlemas at 4 p.m., followed by "Isaac Watts 350." Marking this anniversary year, music director Jeremy Tingle discusses the history of Anglican hymns, focusing on Mr. Watts's paraphrases of the psalms. At St. Olave, Bloor Street and Windermere Road, Toronto, or watch online live or later.

## Service celebrates Christian unity

A special service marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held on Jan. 21 at 4 p.m. celebrating the theme "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27). For the first time, the annual service will be held at St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral, 455 Ferrier St., Markham. This large and impressive cathedral, which has been open for less than 10 years, includes beautiful wood carvings and icons created in

Egypt. The service is organized by the Greater Toronto Area Christian Council of Churches and includes participants from across the wide diversity of Christian churches present in the GTA. Bishop Peter Fenty will join the Coptic bishop, the Roman Catholic archbishop and representatives from the Lutheran, Pentecostal, Baptist, Greek Orthodox, Mar Thoma and many other churches. All are welcome.

## We think the time is right to do it

Continued from Page 13

### Do you think the campaign will be successful?

Absolutely. I think it's reasonable to assume that our diocese can raise \$50 million, with the majority of those funds being retained by parishes for their own

ministry needs, and additional funds being utilized by the diocese for strategic purposes - some of it invested in parishes, others retained in the Anglican Diocese of Toronto Foundation for long-term ministry needs. Before Our Faith-Our

Hope, Anglicans participated in Faith in Action and Anglicans in Mission, and in both cases they demonstrated incredible generosity, supporting local, diocesan and national initiatives. This is a once in a generation initiative, and we think the

time is right to do it. I have no doubt that it will inspire generosity, encourage and promote volunteer leadership and help our congregations feel proud of the ministry that they're doing and supporting in their communities.

# Church welcomes eight from all walks of life

ON Nov. 19, St. Margaret, New Toronto welcomed eight new members through baptism, confirmation and reaffirmation of faith. Bishop Kevin Robertson presided at the service.

“These are wonderful signs that God is still at work in our midst, calling, forming and enabling a new generation to serve, pray and grow in discipleship, even in these troubling times,” said the Rev. Jacqueline Daley, incumbent. “We are grateful for their witness and the courage they displayed in their decisions to follow Jesus.”

Here are their testimonies and stories.

## Shilah Jaiann Akosua Nii Noi

My name is Sandra, mother of baby Shilah. My family and I have been members of St. Margaret's since the early 2000s. We have all been baptized and confirmed at the church. I plan to raise Shilah in the Christian faith and grow my own faith.

## Raynae Pierre

Raynae was baptized in the Anglican Church as a baby. Her mother is an Anglican and her dad is Catholic. Both of her parents have a strong upbringing in their faith and believe that instilling the teachings of their beliefs as Christians in her at an early age will help to ground Raynae in the faith and love of Jesus Christ. Raynae's decision to be confirmed is a huge step in her life. She is now using her voice to say “yes” to following Jesus Christ and to continue to live out the promises that were made for her as a child during baptism, as she continues to grow as a Christian.

## Chukwujekwu Anazodo

My name is Jekwu, short form for Chukwujekwu, which in my language means God will speak for me. I am 17 years old and moved to Canada last December from Texas, where I was born. I love playing soccer and sports in general and I decided to be baptized to get closer to God and build my faith that I was raised in from a baby. My family are all strong Christians and church members. I am one of the Zoom techs, I volunteered at VBS and help out whenever I am needed.

## Britt Hudson

My name is Britt Hudson. I'm a queer, non-binary Black person who has always held communion with God and humanity as central to my spiritual practice. In 2017, I



**Clockwise from top: Kennedy, a member of the youth group, helps Bishop Robertson explain his vestments, mitre, staff and bishop's ring during the service; Bishop Robertson baptizes Shilah; a group photo of those who were baptized, confirmed and reaffirmed their faith; cutting the cake at the reception. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HUDSON**

left the church community I was raised in because of my sexuality. I accepted a position as a children's minister in an Anglican Church. I thought it would be just another job aligned with my calling, but little did I know that through that position, I'd find my home. Since then, I've found a new home in the Anglican Communion through Black Anglicans of Canada and St. Margaret's. I see confirmation as an opportunity to make my place in this community official by saying: “I will, with God's help.” I'll be present with others, love my neighbors and serve and be served within communion.

## Joan Nelson

I am choosing to be baptized now because I have always been a spiritual person. I always believed there was someone or some thing watching over me. As I got older and remembered my mother taking me to church, I learned about God and the bible. God has brought me through so much, from the moment I was in my mother's womb until now. I now know I need to commit to my Lord and Saviour to get me



through the rest of my life.

## Cathy Nicholson

My name is Cathy Nicholson, I am 59 years old. I have had MS for the past 30 years, but MS does not have me. I am still walking, love to talk and I have a sense of humor. I am Indigenous and I have a son, who is also thinking about being baptized after I told him about my decision. I decided to be baptized because my mother wanted us to make our own decision to join church, so when I heard about baptism in the announcement, I was the first

to sign up. I used to live down the street from the church and started coming to church.

## Pheobe Iloezumma

My name is Pheobe Iloezumma. I am from Nigeria and have been in Canada for four years. I was born and raised in the Anglican Church. My friend Jennifer invited me to St. Margaret's. The church has been very good to me. I help make and serve coffee on Sundays. I believe in God, who created heaven and earth. God has made me to have faith in him. I was baptized as a baby, but

never confirmed, so I want to be confirmed for this reason.

## Bernie Lee Thompson

My name is Bernie Lee Thompson. Some people call me “B.” I legally changed my name to Bernie Lee when I transitioned from female to non-binary in 2018, at 72 years young. My trans non-binary pronouns are they/them/he. I'm looking forward to the re-affirmation and renewal of baptism vows under my new gender identity and given names as my true self, made in the image of God.